



**Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District**  
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## **LOCAL CLEAN AIR GAINS CONTINUE DESPITE SLIGHT SMOG INCREASE IN 2002**

Victorville -- Although High Desert residents experienced slightly more smoggy days this summer than last, local air quality trends continued to demonstrate steady progress toward eradicating smog in the region, officials at the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) have announced.

During the 2002 smog season – which spanned from May to October – 12 exceedances of the federal .12 parts per million (ppm) one-hour ozone standard were recorded within the MDAQMD's boundaries, which encompass 20,000 square miles of the Mojave Desert, including the Victor Valley. In contrast, 3 federal exceedances were logged within the MDAQMD in 2001, while 10 days exceeded the federal health standard during 2000.

The modest rise in unhealthy ozone days in the Mojave Desert mirrored a statewide trend in increased smog levels this summer, caused by hotter than normal temperatures, coupled with ozone-forming gasses from wildfires which raged throughout California. Locally, higher than normal levels of windblown smog from the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB) – which includes the metropolitan Los Angeles and Orange County regions - was the major cause of increased smog levels within the MDAQMD in 2002.

Despite this increase, data from the 2002 ozone season reflects a dramatic improvement in local air quality from a decade ago in 1992, when 77 ozone exceedances were recorded District-wide.

The High Desert's 2002 ozone readings also compared favorably with those measured down the hill in the SoCAB: by October of 2002, 49 unhealthy days had been recorded within the SoCAB's boundaries, up from 36 days recorded in 2001 and 40 in 2000.

Unfavorable weather trends and wildfire activity notwithstanding, Mojave Desert residents continued to enjoy some of the best air quality anywhere in Southern California, according to Chuck Fryxell, Air Pollution Control Officer for the MDAQMD. “Despite our proximity to major metropolitan hubs, High Desert residents have not experienced a Stage 1 episode (when ozone levels reach .20 ppm) since 1998,” commented Fryxell.

According to Fryxell, reducing pollution from cars, trucks and other mobile sources – which account for more than 60% of ozone forming emissions in the region – is the key to perpetuating the Mojave Desert’s long-term air quality improvement trend. “By making and supporting wise transportation choices, High Desert residents can help secure our legendary clean air for future generations,” stated Fryxell

To learn more about the High Desert’s air quality and how you can help protect it, call the MDAQMD at (760) 245-1661 or visit the MDAQMD online at [www.mdaqmd.ca.gov](http://www.mdaqmd.ca.gov).

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